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The China Inland Mission



Prayer Union
Origin and Purpose



Mission Home and Offices:
507 632 Church St., Toronto.

Price, 3 cents each; 25 cents a dozen; \$1.00 a hundred.

THE CHINA INLAND MISSION.

PRAYER UNION.

Origin.

In the year 1893, three members of the Mission Council in Toronto had it laid upon their hearts, after much prayer, to cross the sea to London, England, to confer there with the Rev. J. Hudson Taylor, the General Director of the China Inland Mission, concerning the work of the Mission in these countries. The work on this continent had been organized, through two successive visits of Mr. Taylor, in 1888 and 1889, and great blessing had been given by the Lord in its development through the intervening years. It was felt, however, that God had still larger blessing in store, if those in charge of the work might be more fully directed into His purposes and plans for it, and the opportunity was thus sought to confer with Mr. Taylor in London, as it was impossible at the time, for him to visit Toronto. It was a long journey to take for no other purpose than that of consultation; but the Lord, having provided funds through private means for two of the members of the delegation, remarkably answered prayer for funds for the third, and thus

both made the journey possible and indicated His will concerning it. The delegation, therefore, left Toronto in December, 1892, and arrived in London in January, 1893, where its members were warmly welcomed at the Mission Home.

During the days of meeting together, almost as much time was spent in prayer as in conferring with one another; for the chief desire of those present was not so much to discover one another's thoughts as the very mind of God. It was not surprising, therefore, that the conclusion of all concerned, in seeking to advance the work of the Mission in North America, was not in the line of obtaining there greater and more numerous meetings, or of securing larger sales of Mission literature, or even of obtaining more workers. As the members of the conference waited upon God and talked together as in His presence, it was felt by each and all that it was necessary to go deeper down than all these things; that the one essential thing to secure was believing, united PRAYER. Among the several decisions which were reached, therefore, at that time, this was the chief: the determination to form a China Inland Mission Prayer Union, with the purpose of gathering together into one band such persons as would consider it their duty before God to remember the needs of the heathen and would regard it a privilege to specially remember the heathen in China, and those foreign and native workers,

including those of the China Inland Mission, who were labouring there in their behalf.

Form.

When the delegation had returned to Toronto, and the details of the organization of the Prayer Union were considered, it was seen that there would be much gain if simplicity of organization could be secured and preserved. It was determined, therefore, that no undue pressure should be used to secure members and that earnestness of purpose on the part of the members should be had in mind rather than large and rapidly increasing numbers. It was decided, also, that the recognized objects of prayer should be limited to four, namely :

For all Missionaries and Native Helpers in China ;

For all China Inland Mission missionaries and native helpers ;

For China's millions, that many may be saved and sanctified ;

For more labourers in China, native and foreign.

It was determined, in addition, that no promise of prayer should be sought for, and that no set time for waiting upon God should be required. It was decided, finally, that cards of membership should be issued, which would have stated on them the objects of prayer and would bear the member's name, and that these should be sent year by year, together with a letter from

the Director of the Mission in North America, to the members of the Union.

History.

The first members of the Prayer Union were given to us from among those who lived nearest the centre of the work on this continent, from the friends of the Mission living in, and near Toronto. The circle which was thus formed, was at first a small one; but it soon enlarged. The Rev. John McCarthy, who had recently come from China and was engaged in deputation work in various parts of the country, had it laid upon his heart to make known the Prayer Union in places where he was speaking, and other deputation workers did the same, and in spite of the original thought of not having anything like a rapid development, the membership soon went into the hundreds. But the friends who were thus binding themselves to us were evidently those who knew the power of prayer, and it became clear that the enlargement was that of real growth under the fostering care of God. Within four years, in this way, the Prayer Union had given to it members throughout the Dominion of Canada and in nearly every State in the Union, besides others in several foreign lands.

Answered Prayers.

The blessings which the Mission has received at home and abroad since the Prayer Union was organized have been more numerous than can be enumerated, and have been more

wonderful than can be described Among other things which can, at least, be mentioned are the following : more candidates have offered to the Mission than before, and these have been of a more promising kind ; more Missionaries have been accepted for service and sent forward to China than before, the number of new Missionaries averaging nearly twenty per annum ; funds have been supplied to the Mission, for outfits, passages and support, in more abundant measure than ever, so that with no solicitation whatever for money, every Missionary selected has been sent to the field and supported on the field ; all out-going and returning Missionaries have been preserved from accident during their long voyages ; no lives from our own number have been lost in China by reason of bandits, robbers, or rioters, though not a few have been seriously threatened ; the general health of the workers in China has been remarkably preserved ; peace and harmony have prevailed among our many Missionaries, and new power has been experienced in their personal lives and in their witnessing among the heathen ; great help has been given to all the Missionaries in the learning of the language, so that not one has failed to acquire sufficient to enable him to preach the Gospel to the people ; lastly, hundreds of heathen, who never imagined until our Missionaries went to China that there was a Christ, now know this blessed fact, and scores have been led through this ministry to accept of

Christ as the Saviour and Sanctifier of the life. These things are not happenings: they have been realized because persons at home have prayed individually and collectively, and it is beyond doubt that the Prayer Union has been the notable means used of God, in connection with the North American part of the work, in bringing in these new and inestimable blessings.

Need.

It is felt more than ever that all our needs may be reduced to one—PRAYER. Let those who now remember the Mission and China continue and increase in prayer; let others unite with these as the Lord's "remembrancers" before the throne of grace, and all problems of men and means, evangelization and salvation, will be solved. If it is true that God is the infinite and indeed only worker; if He is able to lead persons to go to China, and to incline others to provide for their going there and for their maintenance on the field; if He is able to guide the Missionaries in their service in China, and to use them in bringing the Glad Tidings in saving power to the heathen; then what is needed is to prevail with God and to make room for Him to work. Prayer does this; and it will do it for the Mission and China, if those friends whom the Lord has given to us will but realize that praying is the most essential thing, and that in comparison to it no gift is so needed and so blessed. Here is a great undiscovered and unoccupied territory for many; here is

a treasure-house scarcely touched as yet for others; here is the fulness of God in Christ in behalf of China for all. Therefore, "Pray without ceasing"; "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest"; let "Prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men"; "Brethren, pray for us."

The Prayer Union is open to all who love the Lord in sincerity, and who will count it a privilege to join with those who are its members in pleading with God in behalf of the objects mentioned upon the Prayer Card. For those who wish to cover the expense of the card and the circular letter sent out with it, there is a voluntary fee of twenty-five cents; and for those who wish to cover the cost of the otherwise free copy of "China's Millions," sent to each member for the year, there is an additional voluntary fee of fifty-cents. Any person, also, who wishes to serve the Lord thus, is free to secure the interest of praying friends, and to send in their names as those who desire to join the Union. All correspondence should be addressed to Mr. Henry W. Frost, 632 Church Street, Toronto, Canada.

"I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me and what I shall answer."